

KEEP IN TOUCH

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- Appropriations
- Commerce & Labor
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- Financial Institutions & Insurance, *Vice Chair*
- Appropriations
- Legislative Evaluation & Analysis Program, *Chair*



Sen.
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Rep.
Phyllis Gutierrez Kenney



Rep.
Jim McIntire

A Report to the 46th Legislative District

Dear Neighbors:

This has been an unusually frustrating legislative year in Olympia. An energy crisis, a drought, a state employees' strike, an earthquake, a budget crunch and a 49-49 tie in the House worked to make this one of the toughest sessions in memory. And it's not over yet. Gov. Locke has called lawmakers back to Olympia (as this goes to press) to develop a long-term plan for the state's transportation needs. We will be sure to update you on any progress that is made during this third special session.

We are pleased, however, that we delivered some substantial measures to Gov. Locke. Some of these bills, which have now been signed into law, include: an operating budget, a capital budget and a current-law transportation budget for the 2001-03 biennium; legislation that addresses our energy crisis; a comprehensive update of our state's water code; salary adjustments for teachers and state employees; foster care reform; and a plan to sustain the state's Basic Health Plan.

During the interim, we'll continue to address unfinished business, such as a state primary election system, prescription drug cost relief, and reform of our shoreline regulations.

As always, we hope you will continue to stay in touch with us.

Sincerely,

Sen. Ken Jacobsen

Rep. Phyllis Gutierrez Kenney

Rep. Jim McIntire



K-12 Education

Our biennial budget provides an increase of almost \$900 million for public schools, making it the best budget for public education in decades. With the help of the voters, we passed a 9.1 percent increase in the school budget for smaller classes, better teacher training, and salary increases. This new budget will increase per student spending from \$4982 to \$5437 per year.

We also passed an important measure to allow retired teachers to return to work without losing their pensions. Prior to passage of this law, certain restrictions prevented teachers who had reached retirement age from receiving their full pension funds if they chose to continue teaching. This prevented many fine teachers from continuing in their professions and prodded some teachers to look for opportunities out of state. Under the new law, co-sponsored by Sen.

Jacobsen and pushed through the House of Representatives by Reps. Gutierrez

Kenney and McIntire, teachers would be allowed up to 1500 hours of employment per school year without a reduction in pension benefits. This new law will help us retain outstanding, experienced teachers in our public schools.



Higher Education

We also made some valuable investments in higher education in this year's budget including:

- Funding 3,575 new enrollments at state colleges and universities.
- More Promise Scholarships for low and middle-income students seeking to earn a college degree.
- A new Technology Institute at the University of Washington-Tacoma campus. The Tech Institute will prepare students for the region's high-demand, high-tech jobs.

Rep. Gutierrez Kenney prime-sponsored the following bills to aid our state's colleges and universities. Both were signed into law by the governor.

- **House Bill 2126**, co-sponsored by Rep. McIntire, authorizes the state's Guaranteed Education Tuition Committee to establish a college savings fund for room and board, books and other expenses for college students. The program, operating in conjunction with the state's pre-paid tuition program, will help families start saving for college long before a student reaches college age.
- **House Bill 1623** Grants institutions of higher education the flexibility to invest surplus funds with the aid of the State Treasurer's Office. The bill will help these institutions establish themselves on firmer financial ground and keep tuition and other fees lower for students.



Transportation

This session, legislators drafted many proposals to erase the Puget Sound region's dubious distinction of having the second worst traffic in the country. Of many measures considered, the following were signed into law: **Senate Bill 6188** - streamlines the environmental permitting process for new transportation projects; **House Bill 1680** - allows the Department of Transportation to contract with a single "design-build" company for projects costing more than \$10 million, instead of using separate contractors for design and construction; and **House Bill 1678** - creates a city and county fund for purchasing right-of-way property prior to construction.

In addition, Gov. Locke has signed a \$3.4 million "current law" transportation budget, which, while it doesn't pay for improvements, at least maintains our current facilities.

To address long-term funding for the state's transportation needs over the next decade Gov. Locke has called lawmakers back to Olympia on July 16.

We remain committed to developing a transportation plan, but there are certain aspects that we consider crucial to any plan, namely: regional governance, where local areas retain their own authority, flexibility and taxing options; in addition to more roadway, *the inclusion of transportation choices*; and investment in telecommuting options, where employees work from home or remote work centers using advanced telecommunications.



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46th District Legislative Report

PROTECTING GUIDE DOGS & SERVICE ANIMALS

Each weekday morning, Hy Cohen and his guide dog, Layla, walked to a bus stop near his house. Then, a new dog moved into the neighborhood and started terrorizing Layla during these morning walks. Layla, trained to be passive toward other dogs, was rendered unable to perform her guide dog duties, often leading Cohen away from his destination.

Cohen contacted local police, but found that little could be done to prevent humans or other dogs from interfering with guide dogs and service animals. Further, he was left to consider retraining Layla to help her overcome her fear of large dogs, an incredibly expensive process, or avoid other dogs whenever possible. In response, Cohen proposed legislation that would strengthen penalties against those who harm or intentionally interfere with these animals.

Rep. Gutierrez Kenney prime-sponsored the legislation in the House with Rep. McIntire signing on as a co-sponsor, while Sen. Jacobsen co-sponsored the Senate version that became "Layla's Law" this spring. On a good note, Layla was successfully re-trained and is happily serving as a guide dog again.



Pictured from left to right are Schelly Cohen, Rep. Gutierrez Kenney, Layla, Hy Cohen, and Sen. Rosemary McAuliffe.



Health Care & Human Services

With a cooling economy, slowing revenues, skyrocketing health care costs and major spending increases in education, many feared that we would be forced to make drastic cuts in health care and human services programs. Yet despite these constraints on our budget, we were careful to ensure that public health and human services programs were not compromised.

Some of the key measures that became law include:

- **House Bill 1397**, increasing pay for long-term caregivers by allocating \$1 million in Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) funds to support relative caregivers in caring for children with special needs.
- **House Bill 1365**, a measure to protect children by notifying parents when baby products, such as car seats and strollers, are recalled.
- **Senate Bill 5533**, a bill to inform parents when pesticides are sprayed near local schools.

We also passed several new laws to strengthen our state's social safety net:

- **Foster care reform (House Bill 1249)** This measure, co-sponsored by Reps. Gutierrez Kenney and McIntire, establishes the goal of earning national accreditation for our state's foster care system by July of 2006. To earn accreditation, the Department of Social & Health Services must adopt national best practice standards to guide the work of front-line caseworkers and administrators. This important legislation will increase accountability and public confidence in Washington's foster care system.
- **Children's Mental Health Study (House Bill 1124)** With recent estimates revealing that one in five children and youth suffer from a mental illness, the Legislature responded by funding a study of mental health services for children. This study will provide an overview of the current system ultimately leading to system-wide improvements. Reps. Gutierrez Kenney and McIntire co-sponsored this legislation, working to attach it to the state's two-year operating budget.

Additionally, budget negotiators were careful to protect important programs including the Basic Health Plan, along with vision, dental and day health care services for the elderly.



Privacy & Identity Theft

More than 500,000 Americans were victims of identity theft last year. This crime can occur in many different ways and it can take years, often at tremendous personal cost, for victims to recover from identity theft. Yet even after clearing up fraudulent credit use, a victim typically remains marked with a debtor's scarlet letter when applying for a home or car loan.

To respond to this growing problem, in 1999, the Legislature passed a law introduced by Rep. McIntire to establish stiff criminal and civil penalties for identity theft and to expand consumer protection enforcement by the Attorney General's Office. This year Rep. McIntire, with the support of Rep. Gutierrez Kenney, fought for a series of improvements. In collaboration with business and consumer advocates throughout the state, the Legislature approved a series of enhancements to build upon our previous effort.

The resulting law, prime-sponsored in the House by Rep. McIntire, strengthened penalties and prosecution for identity theft and provides consumers with the tools they need to heal the damage done to their good financial record by identity thieves.

Specifically, the new law will:

- Establish jurisdiction of identity theft crimes in the victim's home county.
- Enable victims to access information that will help clean up their credit.
- Allow victims to block phony transactions on credit reports.
- Strengthen penalties on perpetrators of identity theft.
- Include certain identity theft crimes in racketeering statutes.

MOTOR VEHICLE EXHAUST SYSTEMS

Of his bills signed into law by Gov. Locke, Sen. Jacobsen would agree that by far the most satisfying was the legislation originally suggested by 18-year-old Matthew Ahl (pictured with Sen. Jacobsen).

Ahl sent a letter to the senator requesting an amendment to the state code that deals with the modification of vehicle exhaust systems. Prior law held that any modification to a vehicle's exhaust system making the muffler louder is not permitted. Ahl said he found the law too vague, especially in light of today's interest in car racing. He added that even though he had an exhaust system that met stringent noise regulations, the law didn't allow anyone to install an after-market exhaust system to increase the performance of their vehicle.



Capital Budget

This year's capital budget scored impressive victories for our K-12 schools, community colleges and recreation areas. Highlights of the budget include:

- \$438 million in school construction assistance.
- \$387 million total for four-year colleges including \$63.5 million for several projects at the University of Washington, such as the Life Sciences II building, Suzzallo Library renovation, and a new prostate cancer research center.
- \$263 million for community colleges.
- \$78 million in housing investments for low-income families, homeless families with children, farmworker housing, the developmentally disabled, and victims of domestic violence.
- \$379 million in community development projects including public works funding to assist local governments, efforts to provide safe drinking water, arts facilities, historic sites, and several projects of statewide significance including x million for the Seattle Opera House.
- \$63 million for salmon recovery efforts, \$60 million for the Trust Land Transfer Program, and \$45 million for the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP).



Sen. Jacobsen agreed with Ahl's assessment and proposed legislation allowing for some modification of engines, while still requiring that the noise emitted be consistent with current regulations on vehicle noise. Sen. Jacobsen added that he was very impressed - as were other legislators - with this teen-ager writing to him, offering a constructive solution to a dilemma rather than just complaining about a situation. Sen. Jacobsen was also impressed with the excellent testimony Ahl gave at the bill's public hearing. The new legislation, Senate Bill 5494, took effect July 21.



Protecting the Environment

This session, Sen. Jacobsen collaborated with Reps. Gutierrez Kenney and McIntire to pass several measures to protect our natural resources and to preserve open space. Two such measures, which have been signed into law by Gov. Locke, are:

Senate Bill 5637: Watershed Health - The state of Washington has begun a long-term process for restoration of watersheds and the naturally occurring species that inhabit them. A diverse range of watershed restoration projects is currently underway, but no consistent evaluation or monitoring approach has ever been developed.

With the passage of Senate Bill 5637, prime-sponsored by Sen. Jacobsen, an oversight committee is established to review the progress of watershed-related monitoring and make recommendations for salmon restoration and watershed health. The committee will be made up of representatives from: the state Salmon Recovery Office, the Department of Ecology, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Conservation Commission, the Puget Sound Action Team, the Department of Natural Resources, the Department of Transportation and the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation.

The committee will be developing their first interim progress report by March 1, 2002.

House Bill 1836: Maintaining Local Parks -

Demand for neighborhood park and recreation opportunities continues to grow along with the population. At the same time, many current facilities are aging and in need of repair. There is concern that current availability and funding for facility maintenance and operation may not keep up with demand.



House Bill 1836 - creates a legislative task force on local park and recreation maintenance and operations. The task force will include representation from team sports, individual sports, youth, and city, county (both urban and rural) and state jurisdictions. The group will be charged with reporting on current local park and recreation uses and trends, current funding, benefits that parks provide to the state, anticipated future needs and recommendations on sources of funding.

Sen. Jacobsen prime-sponsored the Senate version of this legislation.

Center for Urban Horticulture

On May 21st, the University of Washington's Center for Urban Horticulture was torched in an arson attack that burned the Center's main hall and destroyed or damaged the work of over 50 faculty, staff and students. Years of research on ecosystem health and plant science were lost in the blaze.

Rep. McIntire, as vice-chair of the Capital Budget Committee, helped find more than \$3 million in the State Building Construction Account to rebuild the center. Rep. McIntire and Rep. Gutierrez Kenney, as members of the House Appropriations Committee, worked with committee chair Rep. Helen Sommers to provide an additional \$1.1 million from the operating budget to help with the rebuilding. Due to their efforts, the University is also authorized to use additional funds to rebuild the Center.

In the Senate, Sen. Jacobsen worked with Sen. Darlene Fairley, Vice Chair of the Capital Budget Subcommittee, to ensure the funding requests passed out of the Senate, and organized a rally on the grounds next to Merrill Hall to highlight the crucial work done by the CUH. The June 1 rally, which sent a clear message to eco-terrorists that arson and vandalism will not be tolerated, was well-attended by the public, CUH staff, press and legislators.

The Horticulture Center, a community favorite, was the first of its kind when it opened 20 years ago. Last year, librarians at The Elisabeth C. Miller Horticultural Library (formerly housed in Merrill Hall) answered more than 12,000 gardening questions from researchers, students and members of the public. Although many of the books need treatment for water and smoke damage, between 80 and 90 percent of the collection was saved.



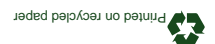
Pictured from left to right are UW employee Joyce Brewster, Rep. McIntire, and John Wott, a UW professor and director of the arboretum who had materials and an office damaged in the fire. (Photo provided courtesy of the University of Washington).



Still To Come

Unfortunately, we did not complete all of our work this session. Three issues that we hope to address in the third special session or next year include:

- **A long-term transportation plan** - We remain committed to developing a statewide transportation funding plan that gives local communities decision-making authority about transportation improvements and taxing options, in addition to offering commuters real transportation choices including buses, commuter rail, HOV lanes, and telecommuting options.
- **A new primary election system** - Last summer, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down our “blanket” primary. This session we were charged with developing a new plan that both gave voters flexibility in casting their votes and agreed with the First Amendment freedom of association. We were prepared to pass several bills that would have met these challenges, but we were frustrated by the tie in the House of Representatives which blocked final action on all of these measures.
- **An anti-bullying bill** - We are finally recognizing the awful impact that bullying has on young people. What was deemed a rite of passage only a short time ago is now being acknowledged for what it truly is- harmful behavior that damages those involved throughout their lives. This session we sought to pass a measure that would help school districts statewide develop a coherent response to bullying. The bill would direct the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to draft a model policy for school districts to draw from while granting local school districts the final say in developing their own policies. The bill was prevented from reaching the floor of the House of Representatives.



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